Much ado about nothing?, Reservoir Storage, Yuba-Feather Forecast Coordinated Operations, Climate Change resources, DWR WebNews, and CoCoRaHS

Well, what started out as a promising long-range wet forecast seems to be dwindling. Oh, there is still rain in the forecast next week, but the prime jet action will occur over Washington and British Columbia, and the period of time that stormy weather is likely is now only a few days. The pattern dries quickly toward the end of next week. So any wet weather may be short-lived.

To break it down a bit more; look for very cold weather heading into the weekend, with some nice crisp, cold Arctic breezes! Early next week, snow levels rise to 9,000' or 10,000', and things warm up with an offshore pattern change. The strong ridge of high pressure will be 'undercut' by a plume of warm moisture. These two weather scenarios are fairly common in La Nina; cold outbreaks (thankfully this one is very short, and not record-breaking), and sporadic periods of rain (some years heavy) when the eastern Pacific high pressure ridge is broken through by a jet stream.

Current forecasts for Northern California rain peak from Sunday night (coast) through Tuesday, with the southernmost extent making it to the I-80 corridor Monday night/ Tuesday. Over the last few days, the numerical guidance models are trending the action to our north and also rebounding to a dry pattern more quickly following that lone system. As of right now, the Feather River Basin is forecast to receive only 0.4"
for the next 10 days. The North coast could see substantial rainfall next week.

The Northern Sierra 8-Station index is at 4.6", or 54% of average for the season. November has only yielded only 1.1", which is a paltry 17% of an average November. October had been a good start, ending with 117%. La Nina years can turn out wetter or drier than normal, or very close to average in terms of the 8-Station. Which type we end up with remains to be seen. But this is a very low Oct/Nov 2-month beginning.
Of those that La Nina years that started dry, the closest match is 1950, which had an Oct/Nov of 4.02". That season ended at 82.8% of average.
Recovery from drier-than-average La Nina starts ranges between 50 and 90% by the time the year is over. (Thanks to Pete Fickenscher of the CNRFC for those figures.)

Current reservoir space, while low in terms of supply, is in great shape for flood control! As of November 27, 2007, storage stands at the following percent of average for this time of year:

Trinity Lake	85%
Shasta	63%
Folsom	54%

Oroville	59%
Bullards Bar	57%
Camanche	89%
New Melones	59%
Don Pedro	60%
San Luis	82%

For a nice write-up on Forecast Coordinated Operations to improve the joint ability to keep flood discharges below levee capacity downstream of the confluence of the Feather and Yuba Rivers during major runoff events, please see the latest California Nevada River Forecast Center's Fall Newsletter:

http://www.cnrfc.noaa.gov/newsletters/cnrfc_news_fall_2007.pdf

The newsletter has some valuable information about the flood potential in Northern California from La Nina, as well.

UC Davis' Department of Land, Air, and Water Resources has announced a seminar series for non-specialists on the science, technology and policy aspects of climate change:

http://lawr.ucdavis.edu/climatechange101

The DWR video produced at Science on a Sphere entitled, "Climate Change, Water Wise," is now available on line at:

http://www.water.ca.gov/climatechange/articles.cfm#presentation

Slide down to presentations; its the most recent addition to the list.
It discusses the possibility of decreasing snowpack in response to atmospheric carbon dioxide increase.

Its an 8-minute TV-documentary-style video co-hosted and co-produced by Elissa Lynn, former Chief Meteorologist at News10 in Sacramento, and current author of this newsletter! I'd like to eventually initiate a weekly video clip on the hottest news topic at DWR and have it streamed on the front page of our website. Well, that's my professional ambition at this time. Moving into modern-day modes of communication would keep us proactive and message-oriented. With the great production staff we have, and FloodSafe initiatives ahead of us, I see this as the future.
Daily DWR WebNews! That's my goal. And thank you for your support.

The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) is going to be launched in California. Support is needed in this data gathering project, which has significant benefit for climate study.
Local observers will log rain, hail, and snow on the internet, and be trained in weather observation. If you are interested in more information on CoCoRaHS, please contact our State Climatologist, Mike Anderson at the following email address:

manderso@water.ca.gov

Look for another issuance of this newsletter next week; which day depends on the intensity and timing of storms.

These newsletters will soon be archived and available on CDEC, as well as on the State Meteorologist and State Climatologist websites. Links will be sent when ready.

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